



An Open & Affirming process is a time of prayer, Bible study, sharing, community building, and reflection that opens your congregation to a welcome that includes all.

The GLAD Alliance Open & Affirming Ministry Program has resources and training to bring more welcome to your congregation without unhealthy division and conflict.

#### GLAD Alliance

*Setting a place at the table for persons of all gender expressions and sexual orientations.*

[www.gladalliance.org](http://www.gladalliance.org)

For more information contact Mark Johnston, Executive Director of GLAD's Open & Affirming Ministry Program.

[mark@gladalliance.org](mailto:mark@gladalliance.org)



## Why "All Are Welcome" isn't enough...

### 10 Reasons to Welcome Openly

- You sang it at youth camp: "Hide it under a bushel? Oh No!"
- Hebrews 13:2 says "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."
- A welcome mat belongs outside your door, not inside.
- Welcome saves lives: young people are hurting and dying. LGBT youth suffer higher rates of depression, substance abuse, homelessness and suicide due to homophobia and rejection.
- In the media, the church is portrayed as judgmental, homophobic, and prejudiced. If you don't say anything, no one will think you're any different.
- There's a teen living next door to your church who is hurting and doesn't know that your congregation can help.
- Micah 6:8 says "What does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Welcome is the foundation of a deep spirituality. Diversity brings life and wholeness to the church.
- Too often, 'All' means 'white, male and straight.' If you don't name me, I don't know that I'm welcome.
- In most churches, "All Are Welcome" means "Everyone who is already like us." To welcome fully, everyone needs to be named explicitly.
- 1 John 4:7 says "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."